



**For Immediate Release
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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION TO
PROVIDE BOAT RAMP MONITORS TO HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE
WEEDS**

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has hired six seasonal boat ramp monitors to check incoming and outgoing boats for aquatic invasive species (AIS) at key locations across the state. This summer, starting Memorial Day weekend one of these monitors will spend a portion of their time at the Lake Cochituate boat ramp in Natick.

The state of aquatic invasive plant species in Massachusetts was outlined in a recent report to the legislature commissioned by Representative Stephen Canessa. The report described current resources to address AIS, management options, costs, future risks, and recommendations.

Many of Massachusetts lakes, including Lake Cochituate in Natick, Wayland and Framingham, are infested with aquatic invasive species such as Eurasian Milfoil, Variable Milfoil and Curly leaved pondweed (all in Lake Cochituate), along with Water Chestnut, and several other species. When these species enter a waterbody they can have a devastating impact on the lake's ecology, on recreation and waterfront property values. Since the local ecosystem did not develop natural controls, (animals or other plants that limit their growth) invasive species may spread rapidly.

Although Lake Cochituate and many other lakes and ponds already are infested with several invasive aquatic plant species, it is critical to prevent the introduction of other AIS to Lake Cochituate, and to stop the spread of AIS out of Lake Cochituate. Studies have shown that the most effective way to prevent the spread of AIS by boats is to conduct a thorough visual survey and remove all plants and animals from the boat motor, trailer, anchors, fishing gear and dive gear and dispose of them on dry land away from the water.

In addition to providing a voluntary visual inspection, boat ramp monitors will survey visitors to assess their awareness of AIS, and hand out educational brochures on AIS. Since 2003, DCR has placed seasonal ramp monitors at a limited number of public facilities across the state. Over the past three seasons, the monitors have surveyed over 2,800 boaters and have made over 180 "saves" where an invasive plant was removed from a boat and prevented from entering or spreading to another waterbody.

For further information on the DCR Lakes and Ponds Program please visit:
<http://www.mass.gov/lakesandponds>.

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